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Canada

CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT AND PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL FOR SHESHATSHIU INNU FIRST NATION

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Sheshatshiu, NL (April 5, 2007) – The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and the Honourable Tom Rideout, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, today announced funding towards the construction of a new school for the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation. The federal government will contribute $14 .6 million and the province has committed to providing $4 million. This is part of the federal government's national announcement of more than $50 million for investment in school infrastructure projects across Canada.

Construction of the new school is expected to begin in Spring 2007.

"The funding of this school is an important step in improving the lives of the children and adults of the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation," Minister Prentice stated, "This new educational facility will ensure that the people of this community will receive the education they need to take advantage of the employment and economic opportunities in Canada, particularly in Labrador."

"Our government is pleased to partner with the federal government on this initiative," said Minister Rideout. "This contribution marks another example of how we are working with the Labrador Innu and the federal government in the healing process. As we work with the Innu Bands and the federal government to continue to implement the recommendations arising from Dr. David Philpott's report on Innu education, this new school will provide an environment in which the Sheshatshiu Innu will be able to assume responsibility for the education of their children. The provincial portion of this funding will be addressed in Budget 2007."

"This funding will go a long way to ensure future generations of Aboriginal leaders receive a first-class education, while retaining their unique culture," said John Hickey, Minister responsible for Labrador Affairs. "Our government has made infrastructure improvements a priority throughout the province and I am always delighted to see new federal investments in infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador."

"We have been waiting a long time for this announcement - and the community is very excited that a new school will finally become a reality," said Sheshatshiu Innu Chief Anastasia Qupee. "Providing a modern, safe and educationally and culturally appropriate environment is critical to our goal of reversing years of education failure and beginning an Innu led process to improve the quality of education available to our children."

"Canada's New Government is committed to taking the steps necessary to address education requirements for First Nations," Minister Prentice added, "We will continue to work in partnership with provinces and First Nations organizations to ensure an effective education system in which First Nations people can excel."

Canada's New Government continues to make investments for education facilities across Canada

to support projects such as construction, renovation, repair, and design and planning projects, including operation and maintenance, to improve learning environments.

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